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sports

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MISSOULA.....

The defending Big Sky champion University of Montana ski team will be hard pressed to capture its fourth straight league crown in the 1973 season, according to coach Rusty Lyons.

"We are strong in the alpine events--downhill and slalom--and exceptionally strong in cross country, but right now we have only two jumpers and we have to enter three to score in a meet," Lyons commented when asked to evaluate his team.

"In cross country we have two Norwegians (freshmen Jan Brentebraten and Guttorm Froysok) who will battle each other for first place, and some good backups in Tom Diehl and Don Verrue. Freshmen Bruce Maxwell and Bruce Tremper and sophomores Dave Hanson and Birger Rusterggard will be outstanding slalom and downhill skiers as soon as they can get in some practice and conditioning time," Lyons added.

In addition to the four fine alpine skiers mentioned, Lyons has transfer Craig Brandon as a fifth downhill and slalom participant. Brandon was the Big Sky downhill champion two years ago as a member of the University of Idaho team. He transferred to Montana when the Moscow-based school dropped its skiing program. Brandon had a poor year in 1972, but Lyons expects him to return to the form he displayed in winning the downhill at the 1971 championships.

Montana's cross country team may be awesome. Brentebraten won the cross country run at last weekend's Kalispell Ski Club Meet despite having arrived in Missoula from his native country five days before the meet. Once he and Froysok, who placed second to Brentebraten in the Kalispell meet, have adjusted to the altitude and worked themselves into shape, Lyons figures they will be unbeatable against Big Sky competition.

In addition to the one-two punch of the Scandanavian products, Lyons has Diehl, the second-place finisher at last year's conference meet, and Verrue, the sixth-place winner at last year's league meet.

Montana does have the defending Big Sky champ in the jumping event. Allan Anderson, a senior from Minneapolis, Minn., placed second at Kalispell in his initial competition of the 1973 season and Lyons expects him to make a strong bid to repeat as conference champion. Last year's eighth-place finisher at the Big Sky finals, Rich Schlaefer, is also back, but Lyons is fearful that a third strong jumper will not develop before the conference meet in February.

"We must come up with another solid jumping competitor if we are to repeat as Big Sky champs. Montana State has a good team and I think that Weber State will also be strong. At this point I feel that it will be a real battle for the championship," Lyons said.

This weekend Lyons takes his entire UM team to Bozeman for Friday and Saturday competition at Bridger Bowl. Idaho State, Weber State, Boise State, Montana, and Northern Arizona, the member schools of the Big Sky that field ski teams, have been invited to the meet.

The slalom and cross country events will be run on Friday and the jumping and downhill events will be run on Saturday.

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